

# Writing for the Web

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## Concision is crucial

For the page summary, condense the main point of the page in 140 characters or less. When users browse site content, they usually read in a non-linear fashion, looking for keywords and phrases to answer their questions. Site usability can increase by 58% when half the words on a webpage are cut.

## The Five Principles of Concision

Delete words that mean little or nothing

### Before

Productivity *actually* depends on *certain* factors that *basically* involve psychology more than *any particular* technology.

### After

Productivity depends on psychology more than technology.

Delete words that repeat the meaning of other words

### Redundant pairings

full and complete	hope and trust	any and all	true and accurate
each and every	basic and fundamental	first and foremost	various and sundry

Delete words implied by other words

### Before

The county manages the educational system and public recreational activities.

### After

The county manages education and public recreation.

Replace a phrase with a word

### Before

*In the event that* you finish early, contact this office.

### After

*If* you finish early, contact this office.

Change negatives to affirmatives

### Before

*Except* when you have *failed* to submit applications *without* documentation, benefits will *not be denied*

### After

You will receive benefits only if you submit your documents.

## Chunk your content

Break up your content into manageable “chunks” of information. Make simple and concise headings, and create a logical order for these chunks. Try to include search keywords in the headings so that users can quickly access the appropriate chunk of information.

## Use headings and text formatting (e.g. bulleted lists, bold/italics)

Users fixate longer on bulleted lists and text formatting. Use these styles to emphasize specific parts of information, or to break up complex content into simple logical steps.

## Active voice for content, Passive for titles

Active voice is best for most of your content, but using passive voice in titles and sub-headings can let you front-load important keywords. This enhances the scannability of your web page.